

The Stonehill High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120252
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	358726
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2010
Reporting inspector	David AnsteadHMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	631
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Dent
Headteacher	Alan Monks
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 33 part-lessons taught by 33 different teachers visited. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the school council 'select committee', staff and three members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, analysed assessment data, checked policies and read reports about the school from the local authority. The views of 135 parents and carers, 111 students and 25 members of staff expressed in questionnaires were taken into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- To what extent has the achievement of all students improved over the last three years and are students of Indian heritage now achieving as well as all other students?
- How well is assessment used to support students' progress?
- How effective is leadership and management in improving provision and can the school sustain improvements in its performance?

Information about the school

The school is of average size in comparison to other middle schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Around one fifth of pupils are from minority ethnic groups with most being of Indian heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average although the proportion with statements is well above average. This is partly because the school incorporates a unit for up to 30 pupils with statements for speech and language difficulties managed by the governing body. The school has recently acquired specialist technology status and it holds the international school award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Care, guidance and support are strengths of the school and ensure there is a welcoming and safe environment for pupils in which to learn. Pupils say they feel safe and they get on well with each other. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and is now good. It is enhanced through good partnerships with other organisations and the neighbouring upper school in particular, with whom a joint bid for specialist status was made. There are good opportunities for pupils to contribute to the local and international communities through, for example, the assistance they have offered to sufferers of oral cancer in Togo. Most outcomes are now good and older pupils told inspectors that they thought the school had improved during their time here.

Although there are considerable fluctuations in the school's performance data over the last three years, there is a clear upward trend which show attainment is average by the end of Year 9. The progress made by pupils during the three years they are at the school is satisfactory overall and good in mathematics. Achievement is satisfactory rather than better because the quality of teaching and the use of assessment by teachers are not as effective as other aspects of provision. Teachers over-direct learning which limits the opportunities for pupils to work independently and in small groups. They do not use assessment information sufficiently to plan work to cater for pupils' different starting points. Where the same work is set for the whole class it is sometimes too easy for some pupils and too difficult for others. Pupils know their target grades but many do not understand what they need to do to reach their targets.

Senior leaders are driving the improvements in provision well. The curriculum has improved, attendance is up and achievement is rising. Senior leaders have the confidence of their staff with all respondents to a questionnaire agreeing the school is well led and with 76% of those agreeing strongly. There are extensive systems for monitoring the work of the school and often these directly involve members of the governing body and pupils. Strengths and weaknesses are correctly identified, although sometimes with insufficient precision to pin down important underlying issues. For instance, trends in attainment against national benchmarks like the proportions of pupils gaining and exceeding Level 5 in National Curriculum subjects are well tracked. However, patterns in the progress made by different pupil cohorts year on year are less well evaluated and, consequently, the school believed its achievement to be better than it is. The impact of improvement work is relatively recent and, considered over a three-year period, the school is demonstrating good ambition and drive and has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Most outcomes are good because of the impact of the good curriculum pupils experience and the good care, guidance and support they receive.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise attainment by:
 - ensuring all pupils understand how to improve their work
 - making sure teachers use assessment information to provide work of appropriate challenge for all pupils
 - providing more opportunities in lessons for pupils to work independently and in small groups
 - evaluating trends in pupil progress data as well as in National Curriculum levels.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment on entry varies between broadly average and above average. The progress made by pupils over the past three years has at times been significantly below national expectations but is now satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with statements for speech and language difficulties make good progress because of the good support they receive from the school's specialist staff. The school carefully tracks the attainment of different pupil groups and, at the time of the last inspection, was aware that pupils of Indian heritage were achieving less well. Strategies were introduced aimed at raising their achievement which have been successful. Pupils of Indian heritage are now achieving slightly better than all other pupils. Achievement overall is satisfactory.

Learning was satisfactory in a majority of lessons seen during the inspection and mostly good in the remainder. Where learning was best, pupils were involved in fast paced, lively activities with plentiful opportunities for them to work in small groups or independently. Pupils enjoyed working like this and made good progress. Satisfactory learning was characterised by teachers talking for lengthy periods to their classes and learning being overly directed with the whole class being taken through a series of steps simultaneously. This meant the pace was moderate, there was a lack of variety and pupils were engaged but not enthused.

Spiritual and moral development is good and well promoted by the citizenship and religious education curriculum. In one outstanding lesson, pupils were asked to reflect on the imagery different cultures have about other's religious beliefs. This culminated in a superb plenary session where small groups of pupils had to decide whether the actions of individuals in portraying other cultures in some real life scenarios were right or wrong. Cultural development is similarly good with students learning about life in other countries through the school's international work. Social development and behaviour are good so that the school is an orderly and harmonious community. Incidents of misbehaviour are infrequent and well dealt with by the school. The use of exclusions as a sanction has declined as behaviour has improved over the last few years.

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Pupils' enjoyment of school is demonstrated by their improved attendance, which is now above average. The development of skills necessary for pupils' future economic well-being are satisfactory, though, and limited by satisfactory attainment in literacy.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and the use of assessment are the weaker aspects of provision and are satisfactory. In the main, there is too much whole-class teaching which limits learning to the pace of the slowest in the group and which stops the brightest making the faster progress of which they are capable. Teachers mark and assess pupils' work frequently but do not use this information to plan different activities appropriate to the differing needs and capabilities of individuals in the class. Pupils are well informed about their target grades for the end of the year but are unclear about precisely what they need to do to reach them.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and has been well adapted and extended to meet the needs of pupils. For instance, there is imaginative provision through the 'Boyz to men' programme and some vocational qualifications which build self-esteem and promote the achievement of targeted individuals. Opportunities for pupils to apply literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects are well planned, as are opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology. There are good plans in place to use specialist

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technology status to further extend the curriculum. The range of after school activities and clubs is good and they are well attended.

All staff, well led by the senior pastoral leaders, are committed to the care, well-being and personal development of their pupils. Transition arrangements from primary schools and to upper schools are thorough and thoughtful, and help ensure that Year 7 pupils are confident in beginning life at their new school and that Year 9 pupils are well prepared for their Year 10 studies. Additional support for pupils who find themselves in vulnerable circumstances is particularly effective in helping these children to succeed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

There have been changes to the leadership structure since the last inspection and middle leaders say they are now clearer about their roles and feel well led and supported. Senior leaders go to great lengths to involve the school community in evaluating the work of the school and in determining strategic plans. One outcome of this has been the creation of five research and development groups which are led by middle leaders and focussed on improving provision. Consequently, trends of improvement are evident in many aspects of the school's work but some have improved faster than others. The curriculum has improved to be good, attendance is now above average, attainment in mathematics is up but the quality of teaching, although improving, remains satisfactory and attainment in other key subjects like English remains average. The gap in attainment between pupils of Indian heritage and all other pupils has been closed because the school has been relentless in pursuing effective strategies to eliminate inequalities in outcomes.

Good safeguarding procedures are in place, overseen rigorously by the governing body. Staff training is of a high quality and ensures that adults working at the school are clear about safeguarding policies and procedures and follow them well. Pupils' cultural development and contribution to the international community are good, but the governing body has not formally and systematically evaluated the impact of the school's work to promote community cohesion. Its evaluation is fragmented and insufficient to enable the governing body to rigorously check how well this statutory duty is being met. Nevertheless, the governing body are supportive and aware of the school's main strengths and weaknesses and the progress being made in addressing the latter.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The views of parents and carers were marginally more positive than is seen nationally about all but two elements of the questionnaire. This reflects the good care pupils receive and the majority of outcomes being good. Parents and carers were slightly less positive about the ways in which the school manages unacceptable behaviour and the extent to which the school helps them support their child's learning. Behaviour observed during the inspection was good around the school and was good in a large majority of lessons. The school has identified in its own planning that it wants to improve the effectiveness with which it engages with parents and carers and involve them more in supporting learning. Inspectors graded this aspect of the school's work as satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Stonehill High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 135 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 631 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	38	76	57	6	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	31	86	65	2	2	2	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	27	86	65	10	8	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	32	77	58	6	5	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	39	29	79	59	8	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	22	85	64	15	11	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	24	89	67	8	6	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	37	28	83	62	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	29	82	62	6	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	26	75	56	10	8	6	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	20	84	63	2	2	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	44	33	78	39	4	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	50	38	74	56	3	2	3	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



5 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Stonehill High School, Leicester, LE4 4JG

Thank you for your friendly welcome when we inspected your school.

We judged that your school is satisfactory and that it is improving well. Although we saw quite a few good lessons, most teaching at the school is satisfactory. This is because too often teachers give the whole class the same work to do or have you doing things together like copying work from the board. This is holding some of you back from making better progress. Test results at the end of Year 9 have improved over the last few years and are best in mathematics. The school looks after you well and helps you to live healthy lifestyles. You told us that you feel safe and that behaviour is better than it used to be, and we were pleased to see good behaviour in lessons and around the school. The headteacher and senior staff are doing a good job of making your school better.

I have asked the headteacher to improve your test results at the end of Year 9 further by:

- ensuring you understand how to improve your work
- providing you with work that is not too easy or too difficult
- making sure that your teachers give you regular opportunities in lessons to work in small groups and on your own.

You can help by following the guidance your teachers give you about how to improve your work and by trying your hardest.

With best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

David Anstead

Her Majesty's Inspector

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